

DIVISION: STDS.

AGE GROUP:

SERIES: ~~ARXIXXCONOMIES~~ 'CURRENT AFFAIRS'

PROGRAMME: (6) "The Commonwealth"

NARR: Hello ~~chilare~~ Boys and Girls,

Have you ever looked at an old map of the World - let's say a map printed in 1946? If you have looked at one you'd be very surprised at the changes that have taken place since then. For instance the first thing you'd notice on an old map is that a large part of the world is coloured Red. Do you know what the Red on these maps ^{stood} ~~stand~~ for? Yes, it stood for all these countries that were ruled by Britain - in other words the British Empire.

Well just compare this old map with one printed recently, say, three months ago. The first thing that strikes your eyes is how few places on the map are still coloured red. The British Emprie has shrunk to a very puny size. And this means that most of those places in Africa, Asia, the West Indies, the Mediterranean Sea, which were once colonies of Britain are now fully Independent states. And you may notice something else. There are a few names on the map of the World today which were not on the old map. For instance, if you look at the West Coast of Africa on the Old Maps, you'll see a /place called the

place called the Gold Coast - a name that tells you that some traders made fortunes out of that area - But there is no Gold Coast there today. Can you tell me what has taken its place? Yes, that is right! The Independent state of Ghana. Now look at the old map of India. Do you notice any thing different from the modern map? Well there is one big difference - There is not just India alone - there is also another independent state - Pakistan. And you won't find part of a big island in the Indian Ocean called British North Borneo any more - it's name is now Sabha - and its part of the Malayan Federation.

Well, children, I think we would agree that the world has changed a lot in the last twenty years. But what about all those countries that were once part of the British Empire? Have they all separated from each other completely and gone, as you would say, their own ways? Well strangely enough the answer for all, except three of them, is no. They haven't separated from each other completely - they have remained linked to each other in a very big group. I'm sure you've heard the name of this group over and over again on the radio. And I'm sure too, that your teachers have mentioned the name to you. Do you know it? Yes, it's The Commonwealth. And it looks as if the Commonwealth will go on growing. For many of the countries which will soon be independent have said that they will remain in the Commonwealth. But why do these countries want to remain in the Commonwealth?

Well, first of all, children, do you remember what we said a few weeks ago about the world becoming smaller? We said that with modern jet planes, and radios and television, and with

/modern weapons too....

modern weapons too - all nations of the world have come to each others door steps. So that instead of breaking up and separating from one another, nations prefer to keep their old ties and their old contacts. And the Commonwealth helps the nations that belong to it to keep meeting one another. For instance every four years all the Premiers and Prime Ministers of Commonwealth countries meet in London. And there they discuss all the problems that face their countries. And they exchange ideas. Some of the Prime Ministers from the richer Commonwealth Countries promise to help the poorer Commonwealth countries. So you see aid passes between these countries. And it isn't only aid in the form of money that's given. There are other kinds of aid. For instance a country like Canada has lent men and women skilled in Science to countries like India and Ceylon. Commonwealth countries exchange teachers. And there are Commonwealth Scholarships. A bright boy or girl living in Guyana may get a Commonwealth Scholarship which takes him to study in India or Australia, or Ghana. Perhaps one of you may one day go to study in another Commonwealth country on one of these Scholarships.

Many Commonwealth Countries also trade with each other on better terms than they trade with countries outside the Commonwealth. Britain does this quite a lot. She doesn't charge goods from Commonwealth countries as heavy duties as she charges many other countries. West Indian and Guyanese Sugar for instance fetch a better price when they go into England than sugar from other places. So you see boys and girls many Commonwealth Countries help one another.

/But you mustn't think...

But you mustn't think, boys and girls, that members of the Commonwealth never quarrel. Some of them do have strong differences of opinion. And yet strangely enough they remain members of the Commonwealth. For instance: India and Pakistan have had a long quarrel ever since they became independent in 1947 over an area called Kashmir. Pakistan says Kashmir really belongs to her - but India says "No. It's part of India". So nearly every year the quarrel grows hot and then it grows cold - or as we might say it hangs fire. Sometimes it looks as if there will be a war between India and Pakistan. But both these countries are good members of the Commonwealth and their leaders meet every four years in London and sit down together and discuss all sorts of problems - though of course they try to avoid Kashmir.

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You know boys and girls there's another thing very strange about the Commonwealth. And it's this. In some Commonwealth countries the Queen of England is regarded as the Queen of those countries. For instance in Canada she's Queen of Canada, so too in Australia and New Zealand, Jamaica and Trinidad. But in other countries she's looked upon not as a Queen but just as the Head of the Commonwealth - ~~Countir~~ Countries like Ghana, Nigeria, India, Pakistan which are Republics. And there's something even stranger still. Malaya has a king of its own. And the little island of Tonga in the Indian Ocean has its own queen. But they are both countries of the Commonwealth of which the Queen of England is the Head.

Now if somebody said "What does the Commonwealth stand for?" Do you think that would be an easy question to answer?

/I think not.

I think not. For the Commonwealth has so many different kinds of Governments that now one can say it stands for this or that idea, or this or that way of carrying? Government. Some people say that the Commonwealth stands for equality in the treatment of men. Perhaps this is true - because South Africa where coloured people are not treated as well as white people - South Africa is now out of the Commonwealth. And most of the members of the Commonwealth felt that South Africa had to go. Or that if she had stayed in the Commonwealth her Government would have had to change her way of treating coloured people.

But whatever it stands for the Commonwealth seems to say to nations that they should learn to get on with each other - even if they have differences. And many other nations are beginning to feel this way more and more. And many nations are now exchanging teachers, and students, and ^{they're helping} keeping one another in many ways. For you see boys and girls whether countries are in the Commonwealth or not they can't afford to ^{ignore} one another.

So long children.